

Luke –Acts

I. Introduction:

Dating and authorship.

II. Themes in Luke:

Overriding theme of Luke-Acts is the end of the Exile.

Return of prophecy.

God in charge of history.

The Holy Spirit.

Announcing this good news in word and action.

Disciples' training messengers of the Gospel.

Jesus' Exodus and the exodus of God's people.

Luke ends pointing forward to the mission of the Church in the power of the Spirit.

III. Acts – an overview of the story.

IV. Themes for a missionary church.

Jesus story continues after the ascension.

Church announces an end to the exile of God's people which began not in Babylon in 587 BC but at the Fall in Eden.

The Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Jesus) continues to work in the world through the church.

Mission of Good news to the poor: outcasts, sinners, all nations and ethnic groups.

Fulfilment of ancient Hebrew prophecy continued in Acts.

Jesus is Lord – Caesar is not, instead he will be judged by Jesus.

V. Luke's missionary theology for a church between the two advents of Jesus.

An openness to sinners (sexually immoral, cheats, liars and traitors; idolaters and magicians). In Luke-Acts you have to prove yourself an enemy of the Gospel before you hear a word of judgement.

The church is God's agent to transform and change the world in the power of the Spirit by bringing to all nations and peoples the gospel of salvation.

God's mission is primary to the church in Acts, everything else serves mission, including worship, tradition and fellowship.

Jesus and the Apostles were prepared to suffer for the gospel – they expected it.

VI. Questions for reflection.

How open are we to sinners? Is unconditional love a way of life or merely a good idea?

Is the church an agent to change the world or a place to hide from the world and especially from change?

How dependent is the church on the leadership and empowerment of the Holy Spirit?

How high is mission on the church's agenda? What are we willing to sacrifice for God's mission?

What is more important to the church than God's mission (shown by our actions and priorities but probably not by our words)?

Are we prepared to suffer for our faith or do we expect God to give us safety, protection and comfort?

Tim Gill, February 2010

<http://marpleparish.co.uk/Resources/theology2.htm>